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CHALLENGE

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June 11, 2003 Volume 38 #11 Suggested Donation $.50 www.plp.org

RACIST NYPD REIGN OF TERROR KILLS TWO BLACK WORKERS

NEW YORK CITY, May 23 — At the break of day on May 16th, a squad of New York's "slimiest" kicked in a Harlem apartment door and attacked with stun gun and grenade. But rather than the drug dealer the cops claimed they were chasing, they had exploded the grenade in front of a life-long city worker and church-goer, Ms. Alberta Spruill. After being handcuffed, she collapsed in shock and died on the way to the hospital.

This was such an obvious "mistake" that Commissioner Kelly and Mayor "Cut-back-everything-except-my-billions" Bloomberg immediately cried crocodile tears of apology, hoping to calm the fury that would rise over yet another racist cop-killing.

The cops acted on an informer's information, and — holding the community in contempt — made no attempt to corroborate it with anyone in her building.

But really this was NO "MISTAKE"! The National Lawyers Guild estimates that one or two unarmed people — usually black or Latino — are killed each week somewhere in the U.S. Several days after Bloomberg's "apology," the cops killed Ousmane Zongo, an unarmed immigrant from Burkina Faso, Africa, a craftsman working in an African art bazaar that flourishes inside a Chelsea warehouse. The official lie was that he tried to pull a cop's gun during a raid on a video piracy outfit. Later it was revealed the victim had nothing to do with the people the cops were raiding.

Mr. Zongo's friends and colleagues described him as a "gentle, friendly" man "who avoided conflict, spoke no English and did little except repair African sculptures in his third-floor stall and send money home to his wife and two children…in Western Africa." (New York Times, (5/24) Alema Zonon, an art vendor from Mr. Zongo's home country, said, "He never, never [fought] with nobody….The police, I can't believe it. They shoot him for nothing." (NYT) A friend said that before he was slain he was preparing to return home to his family.

These murders are part of the racist terror and intensification of fascist repression designed to intimidate working people from fighting back against the sharpening oppression of an empire struggling to maintain world rule. Immigrants have always been special targets of this terror, but with post-9/11 Homeland "Security" the door kick-in at daybreak has become a regular occurrence for our Arab, Islamic and South Asian sisters and brothers. Ms. Spruill's murder shows that the police are being given the green light to attack ANY ONE OF US, citizen or immigrant, in the most barbaric way.

A fight back is developing. Two Harlem-based vigils and marches are planned this week. This killing — and the Patriot Act fascism it represents — must be sharply raised in every workplace, school and organization. Resolutions like several already passed in various organizations must be endorsed and circulated. And most of all action, not just agitation, must be urged aggressively to turn the tide of this obviously growing fascism. PL'ers active in these struggles must show co-workers that racist terror/cutbacks and capitalism are birds of a feather, and that the role of cops is to serve as goons of the rulers' fascist terror.✪

Liberal Democratic Candidates Want to 'Out-Hitler' Bush Gang

U.S. rulers have made a clumsy attempt to disguise their bloody drive for world domination as a crusade against "global terrorism." The 9/11 attacks gave them an excuse to wreak havoc in Afghanistan and to invade the Persian Gulf. Their recent conquest of Iraq represents one step in a much broader imperialist strategy. It includes more oil wars and eventually confrontations with other imperialist rivals temporarily too weak to challenge the U.S. head-on.

The big bosses understand that this strategy requires fascism — a full-blown police state — at home. They need to discipline and mobilize the working class to fight for U.S. imperialism and accept the inevitable casualties and sacrifices. The rulers also need discipline within their own ranks. A tactical squabble has been raging among them about the best methods for achieving these goals, paralleling the foreign policy spats between "neo-conservatives" and liberals.

Workers' Only Interest in Bosses' Dispute: Organize to Fight Them All

Workers have no stake in allying with any of the rulers as they argue over how to conquer the world and implement their police state. Our only interest lies in organizing to smash them all by building the Progressive Labor Party and planting the seeds for communist revolution.

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EDITORIAL: Workers Must Fight Liberals' Police State

continued front page

However, it's important to recognize the true motives behind the big lies the rulers are spreading, to identify the enemy who speaks in "friendly" tones. As usual, the main danger to the working class is the liberal wing of the U.S. Establishment.

Shortly after 9/11, the liberals began lambasting Bush for blowing a golden opportunity to set up a police state, focusing on his economic policies. Bush has tried to develop the police state on the cheap. His "have-your-cake-and-eat-it" approach tries to combine fascism and hefty tax cuts for his corporate buddies. The liberals squawk that this approach won't work, saying centralizing the government and mobilizing the population on a level unprecedented in U.S. history will require a vast, costly effort. Their favorite parallel is World War II. They want to channel billions into the U.S. drive for world domination, not into Bush's tax cuts. With the 2004 presidential election season nearing, they've begun to play their hand.

New Mexico's Governor, Democrat Bill Richardson, with deep ties to the Rockefeller wing of the Eastern Establishment, recently called for Democrats to develop a "strong economic message" and a "strong national security message," adding, "if we need to use force, we do it." (New York Times, 5/26)

Then Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman, who demanded a department of "Homeland Security" when Bush still opposed it, says "the Bush administration is not spending enough on homeland defenses." (CNN, 5/22). Florida Senator Bob Graham proposes that the FBI "strengthen and improve its domestic capability as fully and as expeditiously as possible" and complains about the FBI's "history of repeated shortcomings…in the face of grave and immediate threats to our homeland" (Prepared Testimony for the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, May 22).

Vietnam War Criminal Kerry: Leader of Liberal Fascists

Right now, the leader of the pack is Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, who honed his skills as a mass murderer during the Vietnam War. Kerry has wrapped a fully-packaged plan for a police state in red, white, and blue and labeled it "a new era of national service." To underscore its paramilitary aspect, Kerry announced it at an American Legion Hall in New Hampshire. The plan includes: college tuition credit for national service, a high school community service graduation requirement to be administered by state governments, the recruitment of 100,000 "older Americans in service" and a "summer of service" for 13-17 year olds, a "rebirth of the Peace Corps" (Kennedy's pet project for getting idealistic youth to work for U.S. imperialism), the recruitment of "more Americans to the military" and the creation of a "new community defense service." (Washington Post, 5/19).

Kerry and the liberals understand, as Hitler did, that a police state is much easier to implement if those whom it oppresses play an enthusiastic role in carrying out their own oppression, a hallmark of the liberal Clinton presidency. Clinton destroyed welfare and replaced it with a form of slave labor. Yet until his final days in office, he enjoyed high poll ratings. Kerry & Co. want to build on this record. He's framing his campaign in the rhetoric of community spirit and self-sacrifice. Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne notices that Kerry has given the "service idea a new twist. Drawing from fellow Vietnam veteran John McCain…Americans, Kerry say[s], 'think elected officials no longer ask them to serve a cause larger than themselves…' [Kerry casts] patriotism and community-mindedness as the opposites of 'get-mine and get-out rhetoric and a 'creed of greed.' These he associate[s] with Bush's overall approach to domestic policy" (Washington Post, 5/20)

Sure, Bush represents greed. Greed is a by-product of the profit system. But Kerry and the liberals serve the same class interests as Bush. Kerry merely has a more sophisticated, class-conscious approach than the Bush gang. "Community-mindedness" and the rejection of selfishness are noble goals. However, what's their true content? For Kerry & Co., this still means conquering the world and inducing us to applaud while we pay the awful price.

The working class's criteria for "community-mindedness" is the complete opposite of the imperialist agenda for war and fascism. Our class consciousness views all bosses as our enemies. The liberals will keep trying to sucker us into marching under the banners of their police state. The Progressive Labor Party will continue to organize workers, students and soldiers into marching under the red flag and fighting for a future of communist revolution.✪

THIS SUMMER A NEW ISSUE OF:
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SUMMER 2003
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Rulers Using SARS to Militarize Public Health

If the SARS virus hadn't broken out, the bosses would have invented something like it. It's given them a golden opportunity to push their plans for domestic fascism.

Police terror is a major component of fascism, but not the only one. To maintain social control, the carrot can serve as an equally useful tool as the stick. Health care is an important carrot.

When the SARS virus began making headlines, Dr. Joshua Lederberg called it "a variation of the common cold…" (L.A. Times, 5/24). Lederberg is President-emeritus of Rockefeller University. He quickly revised his political estimate and now thunders that this virus is the "single greatest threat to man's dominance on the planet." (Quoted in Dr. Elin Gursky, "Now to Confront a Greater Enemy," ANSER, Institute for Homeland Security)

CHALLENGE readers will remember the "anthrax scare" that followed the 9/11 terror attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. The bosses never found the culprit, but they made a lot of hay about "bioterrorism." As early as November 2001, Democratic Senators Jay Rockefeller and Bill Frist held a public forum linking epidemics to bioterrorism. Now a virtual industry has emerged combining the two. Its leaders include scientific and political pillars of the Eastern Establishment. On November 1, 2001, Margaret Hamburg warned the Rockefeller-Frist gabfest: "We need to recognize that public health is public safety, and an important pillar in our national security framework….Public health is a critical defense need" (Transcript, "Bioterrorism and Biodefense: Are We Ready?"). Hamburg is a former New York City Health Commissioner, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and an Overseer of Harvard University.

Dr. Elin Gursky, a Senior Fellow at the ANSER Institute for Homeland Security, links SARS and the imperialists' recent war in Iraq. She praises the U.S. military's "flexibility," laments that the health care establishment lags far behind it, and calls for a dramatic increase in the number of public health employees, concluding: "The nation's ability to meet the threat of terrorists as well as newly-emerging diseases is now clearly a matter of 21st century national security" (op. cit.).

The rulers' response to SARS exposes their intention to militarize public health and use it as a tactic for sweet-talking or coercing us into relying on them to "protect" us under any and all circumstances. This is the main aspect of the SARS episode. The disease itself will probably soon be replaced by another real or concocted public health emergency. But imperialist war and fascism will not go away. They must be destroyed. We need to remain vigilant about the rulers' schemes for conning us into depending upon them for our "well-being." Only a revolutionary communist analysis of events can provide the framework for doing this.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $.50. Subscription: $15. Six months: $10. Send address changes to *CHALLENGE* Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. June 11, 2003 Volume 38, No.11

Back Workers' Fight vs. GE Warmaker, Strike-breaker

Twenty-four thousand General Electric workers may strike the world's third largest corporation — and most profitable arms producer — in June. It would be the first nationwide walkout by GE workers in 34 years. One-third of GE's workforce has 30 years service.

GE is demanding workers pay $900 annual health insurance co-payments. In January, targeted two-day strikes protested the company's unilaterally imposed $200 hike.

GE's net profit in the first quarter of 2003 was $3.2 BILLION — an annual rate of nearly $12.8 billion — a slight "slippage" from its 2001 record of $13.6 billion. Now this multi-billion dollar giant wants to soak its workers for health insurance after they've given a lifetime of work to produce those huge profits.

Thirteen unions are involved and the bosses hope to play them off against each other. Already the Machinists have broken away from the unified bargaining team. But that "team" doesn't seem to be adopting a class struggle position. The International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), which recently merged with the CWA (communications workers), is the largest of the thirteen and wants GE to remain "neutral" in any unionization drive. GE's CEO is having none of it.

May Day in Los Angeles, CA 2003

The world crisis of capitalism is moving GE to squeeze its workers even more. When profits "drop" from $13 billion to $12 billion, they start to worry. This crisis is tied to U.S. imperialism's drive to permanent war to deal with its economic rivals. GE reaps huge profits selling the weapons that are killing workers around the world. GE bosses call on their workers to "patriotically" produce these weapons and then demands that they take cuts in their hard-earned wages and benefits to maintain GE's profits and the bosses' war machine.

Should GE workers strike, all workers and students should support it — joining the picket lines, helping to stop scabs, raising money in their organizations, passing resolutions, picketing GE sales units, inviting GE workers to union meetings and campuses to speak about and marshal support for the strikers. This is an opportunity to organize all those who opposed the U.S. war in Iraq to help GE workers fight one of the world's leading war makers.

A militant strike against this war maker and strike breaker can inspire workers worldwide and send shivers down the spines of GE and its class. "Workers of the world, unite!"✪

How Anti-Communism Screwed GE Workers

The communist-led United Electrical Workers (UE) unionized GE and the other large electronics industry corporations in the mid-1930s. When the Second World War ended, the CIO's UE had 650,000 members, including all of GE's production workers. Then came the ferocious anti-communism of the Cold War. Most of the CIO's leadership marched behind the U.S. ruling class's anti-Soviet offensive. The Reuther CIO leadership set up rival unions to its left-led sections. The IUE was born as a dual union to UE.

A key certification struggle occurred at GE's giant 10,000-worker Lynn, Mass., plant. The night before the vote, liberal Democratic Senator Hubert Humphrey (later vice-president under Lyndon Johnson) wired Lynn's GE workers that if they voted for UE, the company would lose all its government contracts and thousands of GE workers would be out of a job. Despite that blatant anti-communism, well over 4,000 workers voted for UE, which lost the election to IUE by just 400 ballots.

When the smoke cleared, the anticommunist IUE had captured 325,000 members, the UE was left with 50,000 and nearly 300,000 electrical workers were lost to unionization altogether from the former 650,000-strong UE.

Anti-communism pays — for the bosses.

Immigrant Workers Caught in Sears Tower 'Terror' Sweep

CHICAGO, IL May 23 — "This is an injustice. How can they take away his life like this?" declared the wife of a Sears Tower janitor, a Mexican immigrant who, after working for only a month, was arrested as part of the "War on Terrorism." Federal police said the sweeps were necessary to protect a potential high-profile target for terrorists. They wouldn't say how many workers were arrested or name their countries of origin.

After the 9/11 attacks, city and federal officials added concrete barriers and X-ray machines to protect the 110-story building. A Sears Tower spokesman said the immigrants worked for tenants, not for the building itself, and that building managers "would…support any steps [taken by] the federal government…"

Last December 10, federal police targeted immigrant airport workers at O'Hare International and Midway Airports. At least 46 were arrested, and 20 were charged with federal criminal offenses. About 40 are still awaiting decisions on their deportation cases. Federal police also made arrests at airports in New York, Miami, Washington and elsewhere as part of Operation Tarmac. One of these workers gave a very moving talk at the PLP Workers' May Day Dinner.

Gail Montenegro, spokeswoman for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement said, "We are…trying to ensure that everyone who has access to secure areas is who they say they are." The arrested janitor had no access to any secure area. She said that even a law-abiding undoncumented immigrant was vulnerable to blackmail from terrorists. "If they're not terrorists hemselves…being…undocumented…leaves them open to coercion," she said.

Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights said, "Do you feel safer because busboys and janitors are being deported?…They are not terrorists, and they are not dangerous. These are the same people President Bush was talking about legalizing just two years ago."

The arrests were carried out during an "orange alert" just before the Memorial Day weekend. While the TV floodlights glared on thousands of "citizen-victims" reporting to hospitals as part of the Homeland Security drill carried out last week, in the darkness federal and local police were planning terror attacks against all immigrant workers. This one-two punch was an attack on the working class at large. The only thing more terrifying than the raids themselves is the deafening silence of the mass movement in response to them. We cannot allow this silence to dominate our unions, churches, classrooms and community organizations. Our response to these fascist attacks must be reflected in a rising CHALLENGE distribution and a more active, fighting revolutionary communist movement.✪

Homeland Security = National Guard Strike-Breaking

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY, May 27 — The AmerGen Energy Co. of Chicago has the New Jersey National Guard inside its Oyster Creek nuclear power plant here on an "anti-terrorist watch" protecting scabs being imported to break the strike of 215 electrical workers. The "war on terror" has come home with a vengeance for striking members of Local 1289 of the IBEW (Int'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers). They're fighting the company's demand to lay off at least 15% of the workforce, plus "flexibility" to lay off even more and also break work-rules to force workers to perform several jobs other than their own.

The contract expired last October, was extended until January and then the company stalled bargaining until unilaterally imposing a new contract on April 14. The NLRB rejected a union petition saying this company move was "unfair," so the workers finally walked out on May 22.

AmerGen says it wants to make the plant "efficient and competitive." Yet since buying the plant three years ago it has already chopped the workforce from 850 to 450 and now wants even more cuts. The bosses hope to break the union by bringing in scabs from its nine other plants.

The striking workers operate Oyster Creek's nuclear reactor, monitor and repair the plant's various gauges and dials, and insure that workers are not exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. They say their jobs are too specialized to risk having to perform jobs other than ones they're trained for.

Right now the plant is shut down because of a cable failure and the company wants the scabs to fix it and get the plant operating again. While the rulers say they're so "concerned" about "terrorists," they're ready to allow this company to use untrained scabs to repair and run a nuclear reactor, and use troops to protect those scabs! This endangers not only the workers but thousands of the state's residents.

Obviously the "war on terror" is a war on the working class, in Iraq and in New Jersey.

Obviously the "war on terror" is a war on the working class, in Iraq and in New Jersey.✪

May Day Deaths Symbolize Betrayal of South Africa's Workers

May Day was a day of anguish for workers in South Africa. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) reported a "tragic accident near Bethlehem, Free State, killing 60 workers, mainly members of the SA Municipal Workers' Union. The bus taking them from Kimberley to a May Day rally in Qwaqwa plunged into a dam. What should have been a celebration of the workers' day turned into a tragedy."

A lack of maintenance on South Africa's roads, creating dangerous conditions, caused this "accident."

After years of rule by the ANC (African National Congress), recent figures show a worsening poverty among black workers since the days of apartheid. Years of militant struggles by workers and youth, which inspired anti-racists worldwide, won little or no gains for apartheid's victims. Early in May BBC News Online reported that, "Incomes in black households fell by 19% between 1995 and 2000….The research carried out by the Univ. of Western Cape surveyed black townships around Cape Town, where it found 76% of households living below the poverty line of $42 per month."

The international anti-racist movement, mostly spearheaded by communists, led heroic struggles. But these struggles were undercut by the erroneous outlook of the old communist movement. Present events in South Africa offer great lessons.

Walter Sisulu, who played a leading role in launching the armed struggle against the apartheid regime died around May Day, just before his 91st birthday. Sisulu was born in a rural region, son of a domestic who became an urban worker. In 1949, he was elected Secretary-General of the ANC and played a central role in shaping it into a major revolutionary, anti-racist organization. During that period, Sisulu fought most of the ANC leadership that opposed multi-racial unity with other non-black groups fighting apartheid. In the early 1950's, he forged an alliance with the India Congresses, the Congress of Democrats (formed by anti-apartheid whites) and the African Coloured People's Organization. Patiently he won the ANC nationalists. who opposed this multi-racial unity, to build a multi-racial movement.

He also fought anti-communism within the liberation movement and built unity between the trade union and communist movements. In 1955 he joined the banned underground Communist Party, later becoming part of its central committee. He was arrested in the early 1960s, and, along with Nelson Mandela, made a defiant speech against the fascist regime, knowing they would pay for this. Both were sentenced to life and spent 25 years in Robben Island prison. Refusing to be broken by the fascists, he organized and politicized younger fellow inmates, turning the jail into what became known as a "people's organization."

He was also a key figure in holding the ANC together during bitter infighting within the anti-apartheid struggle. Like many revolutionaries, he was also a loving husband, father and grandfather.

But despite his commitment and his dream of a revolutionary, anti-racist, multi-racial South Africa, the movement he helped found and lead established a capitalist regime. Now the same workers who fought apartheid are organizing mass struggles and strikes against the evils of the profit system — unemployment, layoffs and poverty — under the ANC government. Despite superficial changes, allowing a few non-whites into the ruling class and among its henchmen, the same racist bosses — Oppenheimer's Anglo-American corporation and other local British/U.S. companies — still run South Africa.

This most enormous tragedy was the fight by the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the entire anti-apartheid movement for capitalism with a "human face." There's no such animal. National liberation has historically maintained the profit system, just with greater participation of local bosses.

Capitalism is based on exploiting workers, no matter who runs the government. The SACP became a reformist, pro-capitalist organization now part of the ANC government. The millions of workers and youth oppressed by apartheid (like the very militant townships rebels known as "young comrades") wanted a system representing their class interests, not a "change of faces." They need communism, where workers rule and whose production serves the working class, not the Oppenheimers and their ilk. That is the lesson PLP have learned from this and many other struggles worldwide. Join us!

Baghdad May Day 1959:

One Million Marched Under Red Flags

Children in Iraq protest the occupation by the U.S.

On May Day, 1959, 44 years ago, one million workers, students, intellectuals and peasants, Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Christians and Jews, marched in Baghdad under the red flags of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). Six years before, the ICP had led a massive general strike against the government and the imperialist oil companies behind it that totally shut down the country and eventually ousted the hated monarchy. The ICP could have taken power but didn't. The reasons were briefly outlined in the CHALLENGE article (5/14) on Iraqi workers needing communist revolution. However, valuable lessons can be drawn from the ICP's achievements and grave mistakes.

Founded in 1935, three years after Britain declared Iraq "independent" (although still its semi-colony), the ICP followed the line of the old international communist movement. During World War II it supported the war against the Nazis and stopped denouncing the British imperialists (who were fighting the fascists). After the war, the anger of the masses at British imperialism and the Iraqi monarchy grew. The ICP attacked both. Then the January 1948 mass uprising erupted, the biggest against the monarchy, begun by students but quickly spreading to workers and peasants. On Jan. 27, the police killed several hundred protestors, but the struggle continued. The Prime Minister fled to London. But when Moscow recognized the state of Israel that year, the ICP (like its sister parties in the Mid-East) was stunned. Many quit. The Iraqi rulers' repression intensified. They publicly executed the head of the ICP.

However, it recovered and grew. From 1953-55, influenced by the Chinese CP, it raised the immediate need of the proletarians to seize power. But when Nasser took over in Egypt under the slogan of "Pan-Arabic socialism," the ICP again sought unity with a "progressive national bourgeoisie."

Finally, in 1958, "free" military officers, following Nasser's lead, overthrew the monarchy, calling for state capitalism under a strong nationalist capitalist class. This movement capitalized on the anti-imperialist and anti-monarchy feelings of the masses. The new military regime was forced to legalize all unions and political parties, but its "socialism" was a sham. U.S., British, French and Dutch oil companies gobbled up the Iraqi Petroleum Co. The Kurds, whose strongest party was the Communist Party, demanded autonomy and, even more important, a share of the oil wealth. The "free officers" government of General Qasim refused.

During World War II [the Iraqi Communist Party-ICP] supported the war against the Nazis and stopped denouncing the British imperialists (who were fighting the fascists). After the war, the anger of the masses at British imperialism and the Iraqi monarchy grew. The ICP attacked both.

The ICP, although not part of the "free officers" movement, supported it. Despite years of repression, the ICP grew stronger — as May Day 1959 demonstrated — impelling CIA head Allen Dulles to label Iraq "the most dangerous place in the world" (shades of Bush!). The new military regime attacked the ICP. The Party, instead of fighting for power (potentially possible), stopped criticizing the Qasim-government. Despite ICP support, the regime continued to jail and kill communists and banned its newspaper. Such were the fruits of supporting the "progressive nationalist" bosses.

In 1963, a Baath Party coup overthrew the Qasim government. The Kennedy CIA provided its new friends in the Baath Party with a hit list of communists. Thousands were jailed and killed. Through several ensuing coups, the ICP grew weaker, suffering many splits, including a Maoist group whose guerrilla warfare against the

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Arundhati Roy's 'Boycott' Solution Will Never End Capitalist Misery

Tens of millions of people worldwide have reacted to U.S. rulers' invasion of Iraq and its more open moves for world domination by moving to the left, by becoming anti-imperialist, by questioning the status quo — capitalism. It is a time when millions can be won from merely opposing imperialism and questioning the profit system that spawns it to seeing the need for communist revolution to forcibly wipe out capitalism.

Recently Arundhati Roy, an activist from India, made a speech to a packed house at the Riverside Church in New York City. Interestingly enough, she was beginning an international tour, sponsored by the Center for Economic and Social Rights, at this epicenter of liberalism, also known as the Rockefellers' church.

While indicting many aspects of U.S. imperialist policy to a cheering, mostly middle class throng, when she reached out for a solution to the mass misery, fascism, racism and war induced by capitalism, she even quoted the Soviet revolutionary Lenin in asking: "What is to be done?" Unfortunately, she did not report his answer: since no ruling class nor oppressive system has ever given up its rule without a violent struggle, the working class must be organized for a violent revolution to defend its class interests. That can only be accomplished under the leadership of its own party, a communist party, organized for a communist revolution to wipe out capitalism, not reform it.

After puncturing holes in many of the rationalizations spouted by Bush to justify the U.S. ruling class's mass murder in Iraq for the past 12 years; after accusing the Bush administration and the 9/11 terrorists of "working as a team;" and after exposing how the Bush gang plans to introduce U.S.-style capitalism into Iraq for the greater glory of the oil billionaires, since, "There is no conventional military force that can challenge the American war machine," what does she propose? A boycott of U.S. and British goods, a "People's sanctions" on every corporation with contracts in Iraq to "force them out of business." Even if such a boycott could succeed, what does that leave us with? A "kinder, gentler" capitalism? A capitalism with a "human face"? This is a call for social democracy, a "solution" that has often led to fascism, or at best an attempt to reform a profit system than cannot be reformed but hides its exploitative nature.

'It is the job of communists to bring Lenin's answer to the working class . . .'

To indict U.S. imperialism for many of its crimes without advancing a strategy to smash it is to allow it to continue wreaking its havoc across the planet. Historically boycotts have never ended an oppressive system. Such actions might sharpen contradictions, but for what? To make for a "kinder" capitalism? Ms. Roy says the Republicans are destroying democracy and that "Americans must take it back." But "democracy" here has always meant capitalist rule, whether by Democratic or Republican servants. Who is the force to challenge the Bushites? Never once is the indictment of U.S. imperialism extended to the Democrats, to the liberals. The clear message from all this would be to vote "bad guy" Bush out and do what? Vote a "good guy" Democrat into the White House in 2004? This is no solution, but rather a continuation of capitalist misery with (possibly) a "gentler face."

Ms. Roy has no class analysis. What she said is completely acceptable to the liberal section of the ruling class, which is why she's allowed to speak at the Riverside Church. Would that have happened if she were to attack capitalism as inevitably exploitative, much less call for communist revolution?

Even assuming Ms. Roy is well-meaning, such well-meaning people can have wrong ideas that are dangerous to the working class. Yes, workers DO want to know "what is to be done." *It is the job of communists to bring Lenin's answer to the working class, especially at the point of production, in the military and in the working-class communities. It is here where PLP's message can become a key force for the solution to all the oppression capitalism hits us with.*

While the movement of millions to an anti-U.S. imperialist stance has been a very positive development, to then divert it into one of rule by liberal capitalists is just as bad as rule by the present cabal and even more dangerous. No, the strategy must be to move those tens of millions opposing U.S. rulers to see that capitalism must be destroyed by communist revolution.

GI's Should Refuse To Be An Occupying Army

The British Army has rejected a Pentagon request to move several thousand of its troops from southern Iraq to patrol Baghdad and relieve the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division (ID). The British said they feared morale problems if they didn't send soldiers home now. This is the same problem U.S. generals are having with the Third ID. The "quick" war is turning into an extended quagmire.

As an occupying army, U.S. and British troops are coming into continuing close contact with large numbers of Iraqi civilians. U.S. soldiers are firing into anti-U.S. demonstrations, killing unarmed civilians at close range on a daily basis.

Not only is this is a crime against Iraqi workers, but the brutality and uncertainty of being an occupier also puts a tremendous strain on soldiers. House-to-house searches and raids, killing of civilians, including children, and spawning the hatred of those the brass said you were "liberating" takes a huge toll. Some Israeli soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza eventually formed a "refusnik" movement, refusing to serve in the dehumanization of being an occupying force that uses such brutal tactics as employing Palestinians as human shields.(The photo above is of a recent demonstration in New York City supporting the "refusnik" soldiers.)

Many U.S. soldiers who were led to believe that after a quick "liberation" they would be going home, may be realizing that this was no liberation and they wouldn't be going home for a while. The strains are starting to show. The disagreement between the U.S. and British military over who will patrol Baghdad is a sign of that stress.

Historically soldiers have rebelled against being occupiers. When World War II ended, tens of thousands of U.S. GI's who helped defeat the Japanese in the Philippines were ready to return home right away. The U.S. bosses were reluctant to send them home because they feared the mass communist-led struggle in Asia at the time, inspired by the Soviet defeat of the Nazis and the growing communist movement in China. So tens of thousands of soldiers openly marched in opposition to the brass and demanded to go home. While the U.S. Army never completely left the Philippines, most soldiers were quickly sent back to the U.S. The "We Want To Go Home" movement was a powerful example of soldiers taking history into their own hands.✪

May Day 2003: 'The Party's in Good Hands'

NEW YORK CITY, May 3 — "The Party is in good hands," said a speaker tonight, as he looked around the room while recounting the history of the Progressive Labor Party. Indeed, May Day here was a resounding success. From the inspiring and informative pre-dinner presentation; to the rousing speeches given primarily by young people; to the delicious, home-made international cuisine; to the rich and varied cultural program, May Day showed that although we have a long road ahead, we're truly on the road to communist revolution.

Because central leadership was placed in youthful hands, with guidance from veteran comrades, our dinner was notable for its variety and spirit. The keynote speeches, two of which were given by young people, were well-planned and enthusiastically delivered. The audience responded eagerly to the call of our featured speaker, as he outlined the inevitability of misery and mass murder under capitalism and asked: "Is this the kind of world we want?" "NO!" shouted the crowd. Another speaker recounted the proud history of May Day, pointing out how even May Day harvest festivals in Europe and the U.S. revealed elements of class struggle between workers and bosses. Later a new young comrade gave an impassioned speech on why he joined the Party and how it helps him fight his "selfish, capitalist ways."

Our cultural program revealed a vast richness of talent. From hip hop to traditional and contemporary folk/protest music, from revolutionary gospel to rock, our Party has found many forms to express the class hatred felt toward the bosses. Singers and poets, especially among the youth, used their talents to expose capitalism and call for communist revolution as the only solution to capitalist wars and terror.

Our well-attended dinner included guests from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, among other places. It had an anti-racist, international character, with workers and youth from many countries.

Our consistent, long-term work in large mass organizations reaped the fruits of our patient labor, both quantitatively (attendance) and qualitatively (participation, recruitment and consolidation). This success is a beacon for us all.

The activities were well-planned by our May Day committee which met months before. Youth were in charge of writing and helping to critique the speeches, as well as planning the event. We emerged inspired by the wealth of knowledge and talent in the Party, determined to bring them to many more workers.

May Day is a time when we as a Party can survey our forces and plan our next steps on the road to revolution. We want to recruit from among the key participants and guests, consolidate present members, and wage fierce class struggle against imperialist war, rising fascism, racist attacks on immigrants and the monstrous budget cuts and unemployment devastating the working class.

Our Party definitely is in good hands. And we must use them to build, body by body, struggle by struggle, a mighty communist party that can crush the ruling class forever and create a world in the tradition of May Day: one working class, worldwide, united and free of exploitation.✪

LETTERS

'Capitalism will be destroyed with the same tools it puts in our hands.'

—A Comrade

Anti-Communism Spawned Bush's Neo-Cons

CHALLENGE has always pointed that anti-communism is a deadly enemy of all workers, showing how workers and others who fall for it sooner or later end up paying for it. Recent events are full of this fact.

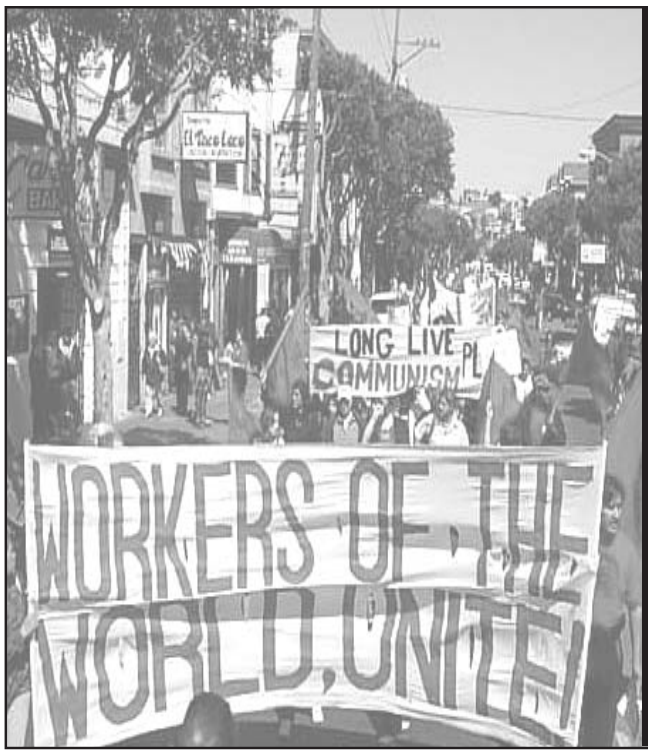
For instance, the gang surrounding Rumsfeld — the so-called Neo-Conservatives (Wolfowitz, Perle, etc.) — are direct descendents of the post-World War II anti-communism of the liberal and Trotskyite movements. Most of these Neo-Cons, and one of their gurus (William Kristol) were Trotskyites then. They soon joined the Cold War anti-communists, led mainly by liberals working with the CIA. Later they were influenced by the philosophy of Leo Strauss, who advanced very elitist, fascist ideas. Strauss (who died in 1973) taught at the Univ. of Chicago and influenced many, including Wolfowitz. Strauss said it was the natural right of the wise and strong to lead societies for the benefit of their "democratic" aims, using subterfuges because telling the truth won't get the job done (see Seymour Hersh article in The New Yorker magazine, 5/12).

The Neo-Cons' lies and deception led to the invasion of Iraq and caused much death and destruction but, after leading the U.S. foreign policy since 9/11, they are now in disarray, particularly since the Eastern Establishment (the main section of the U.S. ruling class) doesn't seem to need them as much.

Many other forms of anti-communism have led to the massacre of millions. In Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, Islamic fundamentalism, pushed anti-communism during the Cold War, serving the aims of U.S. rulers. Osama bin Laden and the Saudi ruling class financed the Islamic fundamentalist movement that fought for the CIA against the Soviet Union's allies in Afghanistan. Today, these fundamentalists have turned against their former U.S. friends.

In the future I'll write more of the many examples of anti-communism leading to fascism and more wars.

An anti anti-communist



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Individual Freed In Collective Fight For Revolution

Capitalism affects every aspect of our society as well as our human relationships. What is sometimes not completely clear is the extent to which capitalism also affects our personal lives. It's not simply a matter of the exploitation of our labor for a wage that cannot give our families a decent life, now or in the future. For this system is also targeting us constantly with propaganda to determine our criteria for self-esteem.

Under capitalism, the worth of human beings is related to the "importance" of their job. We often evaluate ourselves according to the same principle. The natural consequence is an individualist rush to be "the best slave in the system," being more and more trapped in the flatteries and briberies of money, social prestige and so on. A person who, for whatever reason, doesn't "qualify" is considered a loser — most tragically, often by themselves as well — whose life is worth nothing.

The answer to bringing back our inner dignity as human beings and workers will never be found in any role assigned by capitalist society. Besides our jobs that we are forced to do to support ourselves, there is another job which really makes life worth living: the daily struggle for revolution and a communist world.

In this job we are not isolated and trapped in our limited individualist goals, but we walk together with our class brothers and sisters. We are not even trapped by time since the struggle for communism is uniting our generation with past and future ones. Not only a day-by-day struggle for life in this capitalist prison, but a long-term outlook to get out of this prison forever.

What are our choices for this truly productive work? Everyone must find their own answers according to their potential, interests and skills that capitalism presents us with in order to maximize their exploitation of us, combined with the opportunities of the moment.

A Comrade

Action Among Masses Spurs PLP Growth

The war in Iraq and the celebration of May Day have affected our relatively new Party club. Apart from our general activities, we had a small dinner with eight adults and four children. As always, we had a great dinner with really good food, as the occasion merited. Some members wore shirts with Party slogans. The celebration was informal but always political. We talked about the war, what can happen now in the Middle East, about fascism and listened to music. One of us reviewed the significance of May Day.

This was the culmination of another year of activity in which we've increased participation in the mass movement. The war sharpened our struggle among co-workers and friends who were drawn closer to the Party. Some were very active with us in the anti-war movement, generating more enthusiasm in two comrades who'd been a little down.

After last year's May Day, the sharp struggles to participate in some mass organizations didn't produce the desired results right away, but gradually the situation changed. Two comrades joined an organization of mainly immigrant workers, another became active in their union, and still another sporadically in a church. As the war neared, club struggles sharpened over more active participation in these organizations. With the war upon us, this involvement grew.

In a meeting before May Day, we discussed the value of these activities. Some felt the effort didn't produce enough results, but we all agreed we had made small but important advances in almost all areas. Some co-workers from our jobs came with us to marches. Some have now participated in study groups; others read CHALLENGE. A friend who had become inactive is now involved again and brought two people to the May Day dinner.

Although our dinner wasn't mass, it was significant. We invited more of our friends to come. Those who didn't called to apologize, asking about the Party's May Day march. They now feel closer to us.

All this hasn't been automatic. More struggle is needed to recruit them to the Party, but being involved with them in the mass movement made everyone more enthusiastic.

The last of our guests stayed to make future plans and promised to keep fighting, with greater commitment. It seemed no one wanted the day to end, but tomorrow is another day, with more workers vowing to fight for the future of the international working class.

A visionary comrade

PL'er Challenges Roy's Smokescreen

LOS ANGELES, May 27 — When Arundhati Roy spoke here today, a PLP member was able to ask, "Since you say that 'government leaders must be held accountable,' isn't it true that the global corporatism that you oppose is really imperialism, which is inherent in the capitalist system, and isn't it true that the leaders who you want us to hold accountable are only accountable to the capitalists and therefore opposed to the interests of the workers of the world and isn't it true that the only way for workers to solve this problem is to organize a revolution to take power and destroy capitalism?"

There was some applause, after which Ms. Roy "replied" that she hadn't said the government leaders are accountable, but that we would have to make them accountable.

CHALLENGE was sold before, during and after the speech. A CHALLENGE seller was asked by an Indian man if "you were the person who asked the question about revolution." "Yes," came the reply but the seller "wished it had been clearer."

"You were very clear," said the man. "Here's $2.00 for your paper."

A PLP leaflet distributed at the event noted that on May 20, 60 million workers in India organized the largest strike since "independence" from British imperialism, and asked, "Isn't such a show of workers' strength at the point of production a better school for revolutionary change than the internet-organized boycotts you suggest?"

Millions in Iraq Marched on May Day in 1959

continued from page 4

Baathites was crushed.

When Saddam Hussein finally came to power in the mid-1970s, he began with a left cover, even allowing ICP and Kurdish participation in the government, But by 1978, Saddam felt strong enough to clamp down on the ICP.

Now the Party has reappeared publicly, the first to publish a newspaper — the People's Path — after the fall of Saddam. It has opened offices in many cities. But its line is even more right-wing than previously. During the Saddam regime it was part of the Iraqi National Front, led by U.S. agent Chalabi. It broke with the Front when the U.S. cut its funds as a Front member. The ICP has renounced any form of revolution (in 1963 it had attacked Leninism). It now wants to build a "European style" social-democracy in Iraq.

But Iraqi workers have a long history of rebellion. A new revolutionary communist movement is a matter of life and death for the working class of Iraq and its allies. Their fight is two-fold, against both the U.S. occupiers and their lackeys), and also the religious fanatics who want to build an Iranian-style Islamic regime. They need the support of the international working class.✪

Building the Party:

Saying 'Yes' To Active Mass Organizing

I had been in my university's Chicano student organization for only three weeks when a leader of the group asked me if I "would like to drive half-way across the country to attend our national conference." Two years ago, I probably would have replied "no" and called someone to leaflet and sell CHALLENGE outside the conference. Little did I realize that by answering "yes" I would not only create a great opportunity to organize among these students, but would learn valuable lessons as well.

The trip became fun and a chance for me to get to really know others in the group. The conference was less nationalistic then I expected and offered many opportunities to discuss revolutionary Marxist ideas openly, probably stemming from the fascism and terror U.S. rulers are openly pushing today. Comrades living in the immediate area, a member organizing in the regional chapter to the north and myself were able to use this exciting mood to both agitate from the outside and organize inside to move the workshops militantly leftward.

Our active struggle at the conference and in our individual chapters sparked a lot of communist discussion on the long trip home, ranging from the war in Iraq — triggered by a CHALLENGE flyer — to communist centralism. A young leader of the organization raised the common misconception that "[working] people don't really have a voice under communism." I pointed out the lack of decision-making power the working class has now, under capitalism (using the war as an example). We discussed how the decision to build a neighborhood power plant might be made under communism. The people in the community, workers trained in power-plant engineering and environmentalists would all be involved. Money, potential profits and labor exploitation would not exist. The working class would come first.

Our talk ended with this same young man saying, "If we're going to do this [communist revolution], I'd like to be a leader of the south central region." This same Chicano student is know receiving the paper and enthusiastically attended our May Day dinner. Another Latina woman from the trip is also becoming more involved.

DON'T FIGHT FOR THE BOSSES' OIL PROFITS, FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER- "COMMUNISM!" P.L.P.
NO LUCHES POR LAS GANANCIAS PETROLERAS DE LOS PATRONES, LUCHA POR EL PODER DE LOS TRABAJADORES "EL COMUNISMO!" P.L.P.

LEARNING FROM STRUGGLE

Careful work does not mean non-work. Nor does it mean reluctance and fear. After 9/11, the political atmosphere and how we function changed. Capitalism's instability has made war and fascism the order of the day.

For us to effectively struggle now, we must actively do so in mass organizations. Without saying "yes" to the trip, this group's leadership could easily have misled my chapter with nationalist and liberal, pacifist ideas. We must react quickly and be willing to aid our comrades "on the inside."

My most important lesson? Often we are too reluctant to tell workers and students about the Party for fear of being "exposed." Certainly, we must take the class enemy into account, but what's the use of careful organization if it stops us from spreading our class view publicly and doesn't let workers and students know a communist party exists that will eventually break the chains pulling us down? By saying "yes" to *actively* struggling in mass organizations, we are saying "yes" to a communist future.✪

U.S. Rulers 'Nuke' Iraqis And Own Soldiers

The so-called precision war by the U.S. against Iraq has left a legacy of death and suffering by radiation poisoning that will last far into the future. Over 200,000 U.S. veterans from the 1991 Gulf war are disabled and over 10,000 have died due to illness caused by that war, many from radiation poisoning because of depleted uranium (DU) weapons. DU is used in many types of ammunition and armor on vehicles. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. and British soldiers and millions of Iraqis have been exposed to these poisons. When DU shells explode, they not only have more immediate killing power but they also create radioactive dust that stays in the environment indefinitely. So in addition to the destruction caused by the initial bombing, the poisons go on killing for years. DU poisoning, in fact, is now killing children born to Iraqis and U.S. soldiers since the poison has passed through semen onto the next generation.

In Gulf War I approximately 300 tons of DU was dropped on Iraq. This time it was between 1,000 and 2,000 tons. Even worse, the majority of the latter were dropped on heavily-populated areas. The U.S. Army Environmental Policy Institute (EPI) admitted that, "If DU enters the body, it has potential to generate significant medical consequences."

DU's lethal nature has been extensively documented yet hardly reported on by the bosses' press. It utterly belies stories of "precision bombing," low U.S. casualties and limited "collateral" damage. Actually, Gulf Wars I and II were mass murder for oil, with extremely high casualties among Iraqi civilians and soldiers as well as U.S. troops. Thus, the great defenders of "civilization" in Washington and London are the main users of weapons of mass destruction.

Current U.S. soldiers should listen to the stories of Gulf war vets suffering from radiation poisoning. Those politicians and TV personalities who wrap themselves in the flag and put up yellow ribbons to support the troops are covering up the military's deception. While U.S. soldiers were invading Iraq and Afghanistan, the very leaders who have been publicly patting them on the back were poisoning them.

Those sailors on the deck of the aircraft carrier where Bush landed to make his gung-ho speech (and then shortly left) have been sleeping and working next to DU bombs and missiles 24/7 for the last ten months.

The military has fought tenaciously to deny benefits to soldiers disabled due by DU poisoning. The military denies it's dangerous, yet their own training manuals advise anyone who comes within 80 feet of DU-contaminated equipment to wear protective gear. The Army knew that if the troops were to realize what they had been exposed to, "the financial implications of long-term disability payments and healthcare costs would be excessive."(EPI)

U.S. rulers will stop at nothing to control the flow of Mid-East oil. They are already developing more "small-scale" nuclear weapons to use on battlefields filled with U.S. soldiers in their upcoming wars. To them the lives of U.S. GI's, like the lives of Iraqi and Afghan workers, mean nothing.✪

Massive Strikes Sweep France

PARIS, May 28 — A wave of strikes swept through France as over 600,000 workers and students marched through this city on May 25 protesting government proposals that would force them to stay on their jobs up to five more years before collecting their pensions. Demonstrators also condemned government plans to make it more difficult for poorer students to obtain a college education. Yesterday an air controllers' walkout grounded 80% of 4,000 scheduled flights. Teachers extended their strike, the seventh such walkout. Parisian sanitation workers struck for a 2nd day. A call went out from transportation and civil service workers for an open-ended strike beginning June 3. All this is part of a fight-back to prevent European bosses from breaking a host of social welfare benefits workers have gained in past struggles.

Basra Oil Workers Lambast Invaders and Ba'ath Stooges

"We want elections, we don't want another Saddam," read the placards of 300 oil workers demonstrating on May 9 at the Basra refinery, second largest in Iraq. They were protesting the British Army's appointment of a Ba'ath Party official to manage the oil works. "We [want] to choose our managers now that Saddam is gone," said Mehdi Saleh Maatouq.

But UK commander Binns is threatening the workers, hiring armed guards because, he says, "People here only understand the law of the gun." This is "liberation," U.S./UK-style.

Iraq's workers can play a crucial role in rebuilding a revolutionary communist movement. The oil workers especially — producing the world's most important resource — are decisive to that revolutionary task. Oil for profits and to maintain world domination are why U.S. bosses invaded in the first place and what's behind their every move. With Exxon, Chevron, BP, Halliburton, Bechtel & Co. moving in, exploitation of Iraq's oil workers will mount. All the more reason to raise the cry, "Oil workers of the world, unite!"

That's why PLP organizes to build an international revolutionary communist movement. This is an urgent task since all kinds of reactionaries, from the hard-core followers of Saddam Hussein to Islamic fundamentalists are trying to co-opt the growing anger of workers and youth against the U.S.-UK occupation forces.✪

Child Labor Is Good For Business

The U.S. ruling class would like workers to believe child labor is something that only happens abroad, mostly in poor, "developing" nations. But child labor is alive and well inside the U.S. and is good for U.S. business.

The super-exploitation of children in agriculture and industry was part of the reason that capitalism flourished in the U.S. Child labor was a common feature of slavery and also occurred among those working for wages. In the 1600's, bosses believed that "children should be industriously employed" and passed laws requiring children to work. With the rise of the industrial revolution at the turn of the 19th century, factory towns became dependent on the super-exploitation of women and children. Children between 7 and 12 made up one-third of the workforce in U.S. factories.

The U.S. government was very cautious about restricting child labor because it would drastically lower bosses' profits. Not until 1938, with passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, were laws enacted concerning minimum wages, overtime pay, safety conditions and child labor (forced by a communist-led movement of millions). But children working on farms are still not subject to laws governing the maximum number of hours they can work outside of school.

A 1997 survey by the Child Labor Coalition found 6,229 employers in 35 states in violation of child labor laws and 7,577 minors were illegally employed in 29 states. Because penalties for these violations are so low, occasional fines hardly dent the profits gained from exploiting these children. In fact, a 1997 study by the Associated Press it found that farmers and factory owners who illegally hire under-age children typically escape civil or criminal punishment altogether.

Rather than re-enforce existing child labor laws, Congress has been relaxing the federal laws protecting child laborers. In 1996 it reversed laws prohibiting minors from loading, operating and repairing paper balers after the National Grocers' Association and Food Market Institute lobbied against the law in order to avoid fines and penalties. Similar instances have occurred in the automotive and sawmill industries. The government has served the interests of the bosses and not the safety of working-class children.

Agri-business is the worst offender. As many as 800,000 children under 18 work as migrant and seasonal farm workers in California alone. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 1992 to 1998 43% of occupational fatalities of children 17 and younger occurred in agriculture. Teenage agricultural workers risk never completing high school; only 47% were in a grade corresponding to their age. Many of these child laborers receive no health insurance and four in five migrant working teens have no family supervision or support.

'The fact is, for U.S. bosses children are desirable as employees because they are easier to control and are less likely to demand higher wages, better working conditions and organize unions.'

The fact is, for U.S. bosses children are desirable as employees because they are easier to control and are less likely to demand higher wages, better working conditions and organize unions. With child labor, industries can pay substandard wages and withhold benefits they normally would have to provide to adult workers. Furthermore, competition among domestic and international bosses has made child labor in "developing" nations a desirable alternative to better-paid adult labor at home. U.S. bosses are doing everything possible to open up cheap child-labor markets here and abroad to safeguard their profits. Under capitalism, child labor is good for business. ✪

Bosses Hide Poverty As Cause Of Disease and AIDS

Our May Day celebration health display table contained a controversial paper disputing contemporary medical theories about HIV/AIDS. This flyer — the opinion of one person — stated that the HIV virus does not resolutely lead to AIDS ending in death. She questioned the medical model which assumes that many diseases of poverty, unsafe water supplies, etc., are being categorized as AIDS caused by HIV when they're actually caused by the poverty induced by the capitalist profit system. Moreover, modern drugs may actually weaken the immune system.

The current medical model is based on two tests, the ELISA and Western Blot. A positive response on either test alone merely shows the presence of a protein present in numerous pathogens. HIV is only one. Others sometimes resulting in an HIV+ result include viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, malaria, auto-immune disease (i.e., lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis), cancer, herpes simplex virus, the flu shot and even pregnancy!

The CDC (Center for Disease Control) definition of AIDS includes people who've ever had a CD4 (immune response "helper cell") lymphocyte count below 200 cells per micro-liter tested positively for HIV or who have infections that can occur with HIV (i.e., pulmonary TB, invasive cervical cancer) and those that rarely occur in the absence of severe immunodeficiency.

Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment 2003 (see reference below) states, "dramatic increases in the efficacy of antiretroviral treatments have improved the prognosis of persons with HIV/AIDS. One consequence is that fewer persons with HIV ever develop an infection or malignancy or have a low enough CD4 count to classify them as having AIDS, which means that the CDC definition has become a less useful measure of the impact of HIV/AIDS in the US." (p. 1272) But this medical book omits the importance of rising hepatitis C-related deaths among HIV/AIDS diagnosed persons, directly corresponding to street intravenous (IV) drug use. They point to life styles as a very relevant component in the HIV survival rates.

Lifestyle factors involved include "recreational" drug use of all kinds — including alcohol — fast living, junk food and many processed foods, tobacco, stress, lack of sleep and sexually transmitted diseases. For example, drug users die at an average age of 31, regardless of HIV status. Clean needles might prevent hepatitis transmission but don't protect against the toxicity of the heroin in the needle.

Most medical texts also do not distinguish between persons labeled as having AIDS and the recognizable diseases of poverty, especially those rampant in Africa where the clinical diagnosis of AIDS includes four symptoms: persistent dry cough, fever, persistent diarrhea and weight loss. These symptoms are common to diseases endemic to many of the poorest nations. Many are also on the list of conditions causing false HIV+ tests, including malaria, TB and parasites. There are 300 million cases of malaria every year. Millions more people are stressed, malnourished, don't have clean water to drink and can't afford mosquito netting.

Companies manufacturing HIV drugs reap mind-boggling profits. AZT, the first approved anti-viral drug, is highly toxic to bone marrow and most (normal) cell replication. But the cost is a "mere" $364 per month compared to the current "cocktail" which costs $1913/month! (ibid, p. 1292) The regimen is complicated; the side effects range from neuropathy to hepatitis and acute gastro-intestinal distress. No wonder people seek alternative theories and treatments.

Primary prevention, such as condom distribution, counseling, safe needles and perinatal HIV prophylaxis are a low priority, quite simply because increasing profits cannot be made from safe sex and widespread education.

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Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment 2003, edited by Lawrence Tierney, Stephen McPhee and Maxine Papadakis "You Don't Have To Die; Lwon Chaltow"